

NEWS

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS



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CONSUMER PRICE INDEX FOR ATLANTA—FEBRUARY 2003

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for Atlanta increased 1.9 percent over the two months ending in February to a level of 180.7 (1982-84=100), not seasonally adjusted, the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor reported today. Regional Commissioner Janet S. Rankin announced that for the 12 months ending in February, the CPI-U for Atlanta increased 2.6 percent.

Over the two months, higher costs for housing, transportation, and apparel accounted for most of the increase in the all items index. Energy costs rose 13.1 percent, while food costs moved up 1.6 percent. Excluding food and energy, the CPI-U for Atlanta rose 0.9 percent since December.

Table A. Percent changes in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers for Atlanta by expenditure category (not seasonally adjusted).

Expenditure category	Percentage change	
	Over 12 months since February 2002	Over 2 months since December 2002
All items	2.6	1.9
Food and beverages	1.1	1.5
Housing	2.1	1.7
Apparel	-6.4	7.5
Transportation	7.7	3.7
Medical care	11.9	0.5
Recreation 1/	-1.0	-0.7
Education and communication 1/	-0.4	-0.4
Other goods and services	1.1	0.4

1/ Index on a December 1997=100 base.

Over the past 12 months, the CPI-U for Atlanta has increased 2.6 percent. During that time period, energy costs increased 20.8 percent and food costs rose 1.2 percent. Excluding the cost of food and energy, the CPI-U for Atlanta has increased 1.2 percent.

Among the major index groups, the food and beverages index rose 1.5 percent over the past two months, reflecting a 1.0 percent rise in the cost of food away from home and a 1.2 percent increase in costs for alcoholic beverages. During that same time period, costs for food at home increased 2.0 percent. Over the year, the food and beverages index has risen 1.1 percent as consumer costs for food

away from home moved up 2.1 percent. Since February 2002, costs for food at home increased 0.4 percent while costs for alcoholic beverages rose 0.9 percent.

Housing costs rose 1.7 percent over two months, as costs for shelter increased 1.3 percent. The shelter index reflects changes in the costs for rent of primary residence, lodging away from home, and owners' equivalent rent of primary residence. Fuels and utilities costs rose 6.5 percent over two months. Utility natural gas service accounted for most of that increase, rising 19.0 percent in two months; while electricity costs increased 0.2 percent. The increase in utility natural gas service was the highest two-month increase since February 2001. Costs for household furnishings and operations declined 0.7 percent. Over the year, housing costs rose 2.1 percent, the same percentage increase as the cost of shelter. Costs for fuels and utilities increased 6.4 percent, reflecting a 17.7 percent rise in utility natural gas service costs. Costs associated with household furnishings and operations declined 4.2 percent over the year.

Apparel costs, which had experienced their largest two-month decline recorded in the index in November-December, rose 7.5 percent in the two months ending in February. Despite the most recent increase, apparel costs in the Atlanta area remained 6.4 percent below their level in February 2002.

The transportation index increased 3.7 percent in the January-February pricing period. A 21.2 percent increase in gasoline costs accounted for the increase. Over the year, transportation costs have risen 7.7 percent, as gasoline costs climbed 45.6 percent.

Other indexes reported include the medical care index, which recorded a 0.5 percent increase over two months. Over the past year, the medical care index rose 11.9 percent. The recreation index declined 0.7 percent over two months, while costs for education and communication declined 0.4 percent. Over the past 12 months, recreation costs have dropped 1.0 percent, while costs for education and communication have decreased 0.4 percent. Costs for other goods and services recorded a 0.4 percent increase over two months, bringing the index to a level 1.1 percent higher than it was in February 2002.

Consumer Price Index for the South and Miami-Fort Lauderdale

Consumer price indexes are published for the Miami-Fort Lauderdale area and the South (which includes the Atlanta and Miami-Fort Lauderdale areas). For the two months ending in February, consumer prices in the Miami-Fort Lauderdale area increased 1.3 percent, while the South rose 1.0 percent. Over the past 12 months, the Miami-Fort Lauderdale index has risen 3.0 percent, while the South's CPI-U increased 3.2 percent.

Technical Notes

The Consumer Price Index for Atlanta is currently published bi-monthly. Prior to 1998, Atlanta data were available for only the first and second halves of the year and as an annual average. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) has updated the consumption expenditure weights in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) and in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) to the 1999-2000 period, effective with the release of data for January 2002. The newer weights replace the 1993-95 weights, which were first used in the index effective with January 1998 data. Additionally, CPI expenditure weights will be updated at two-year intervals subsequent to the 2002 updating. Thus, for example, CPI expenditure weights will be updated to the 2001-02 period effective with the release of CPI data for January 2004.

Local area CPI indexes are by-products of the national CPI program. Because each local index is a small subset of the national index, it has a smaller sample size and is, therefore, subject to substantially more sampling and measurement error than the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar. The Bureau of Labor Statistics strongly urges users to consider adopting the national average CPI for use in escalator clauses.

We encourage users interested in learning more about changes to the CPI to contact the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Information on the Consumer Price Index and other surveys are available on our web site at <http://www.bls.gov>. Current and historical BLS data are also posted on our Internet page at <http://www.bls.gov/ro4/home.htm>. CPI data are also available through our fax-on-demand system. For a catalog of items available to be faxed to you, call our fax-on-demand number at (404) 331-3403. If you have additional questions, you can contact the Atlanta information office directly by dialing (404) 331-3415, and customers in the Miami area can reach us at (305) 358-2305.

Table 1. Consumer price index for all urban consumers and urban wage earners and clerical workers, Atlanta, Georgia, (1982-84=100), not seasonally adjusted.

Group	All urban consumers			Urban wage earners and clerical workers		
	Index February 2003	Percent change to Feb 2003 from		Index February 2003	Percent change to Feb 2003 from	
		Feb 2002	Dec 2002		Feb 2002	Dec 2002
All items	180.7	2.6	1.9	178.1	2.8	2.0
All items (1967=100)	544.9	-	-	538.4	-	-
Food and beverages	184.7	1.1	1.5	182.8	0.8	1.7
Food	190.5	1.2	1.6	187.5	0.8	1.6
Food at home	183.7	0.4	2.0	178.7	0.1	2.0
Food away from home	201.7	2.1	1.0	202.8	2.0	1.1
Alcoholic beverages	134.5	0.9	1.2	132.5	1.1	1.8
Housing	180.5	2.1	1.7	178.3	2.2	1.7
Shelter	202.5	2.1	1.3	198.0	2.0	1.2
Rent of primary residence	207.6	0.1	1.5	207.6	0.1	1.5
Owners' equivalent rent (1)	202.8	2.7	0.8	188.8	2.7	0.8
Fuel and utilities	170.3	6.4	6.5	168.0	5.7	5.9
Fuels	158.2	7.2	7.7	155.5	6.4	7.0
Gas (piped) and electricity	158.8	6.6	7.3	155.9	6.2	6.8
Electricity	131.3	0.0	0.2	131.3	0.0	0.2
Utility natural gas service	216.3	17.7	19.0	216.3	17.7	19.0
Household furnishings and Operation	121.0	-4.2	-0.7	126.1	-1.9	-1.2
Apparel	131.5	-6.4	7.5	127.8	-7.3	8.2
Transportation	145.0	7.7	3.7	142.6	8.4	4.2
Private transportation	145.1	8.4	4.0	141.3	8.9	4.4
Motor fuel	128.4	45.4	21.2	128.3	45.5	21.2
Gasoline (all types)	127.4	45.6	21.2	127.4	45.6	21.2
Regular unleaded (2)	125.4	49.3	22.7	125.4	49.3	22.7
Midgrade unleaded (2) (3)	153.5	42.5	20.4	153.5	42.5	20.4
Premium unleaded (2)	131.6	39.7	18.7	131.6	39.7	18.8
Medical care	310.1	11.9	0.5	305.8	13.7	0.5
Recreation (4)	106.6	-1.0	-0.7	102.5	-1.2	-0.5
Education and communication (4)	108.4	-0.4	-0.4	107.8	-0.6	-0.3
Other goods and services	273.2	1.1	0.4	298.5	1.8	0.8
SPECIAL AGGREGATE INDEXES						
Commodities	148.2	1.7	3.0	148.5	2.2	3.0
Commodities less food and beverages	129.6	2.1	3.9	131.1	3.4	4.1
Nondurables less food and beverages	144.4	5.9	7.9	151.2	7.8	8.5
Durables	112.3	-2.5	-1.1	113.5	-1.6	-0.9
Services	213.1	3.1	1.3	212.3	3.3	1.4
All items less medical care	173.6	2.1	2.0	171.7	2.3	2.1
All items less shelter	174.1	2.8	2.2	172.9	3.3	2.4
Commodities less food	129.6	2.1	3.8	131.1	3.3	4.0
Nondurables	163.6	3.2	4.3	165.7	3.6	4.3
Nondurables less food	143.0	5.5	7.4	149.4	7.3	7.9
Energy	132.2	20.8	13.1	130.6	20.8	12.9
All items less energy	187.2	1.2	1.0	184.8	1.3	1.0
All items less food and energy	187.2	1.2	0.9	184.8	1.5	0.9
Purchasing power of the consumer						
dollar: 1982-84=\$1.00	\$.553	-	-	\$.561	-	-
1967=\$1.00	\$.184	-	-	\$.186	-	-

1/ Index is on a November 1982=100 base.

2/ Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

- Data not available.

3/ Index is on a December 1993=100 base.

4/ Index is on a December 1997=100 base.